



INShape 150 – Body Weight Exercises

Back to basics with calisthenics

Last week we talked about the importance of strength training and the benefits of increasing lean muscle mass. While you might think quality strength training can only be done at a health club using expensive equipment, think back to your old gym class. Remember doing jumping jacks, push-ups, and lunges? At the time, you probably did not place much value on the benefits of these basic exercises. However, old school calisthenics are a simple, cheap, and effective way to improve your overall conditioning.

Calisthenics trace their origins to ancient Greece – the name combines the words kalos (beauty) and sthenos (strength) – and were originally a form of gymnastics. These exercises have evolved into various compound movements that use the body's own weight as resistance. No machines or weights are required. You can do them virtually anywhere and train your entire body with only a few basic exercises.

Due to their simplicity, most people fail to realize that body weight movements form the foundation any fitness program. Body weight exercises teach you how to move your body in a controlled and efficient manner, and provide you with the skills you will need once you graduate to more advanced forms of physical activity. Below are a few benefits to bodyweight calisthenics:

- **Anytime Anywhere** – Body weight exercises require minimal space and can be done at home, outdoors, and, if you are traveling, in your hotel room.
- **No equipment** – You do not need any equipment to have effective body weight workouts. Your own weight is enough to produce health benefits. However, you can add items like a pull-up bar, chair or a sturdy box to increase the intensity of some moves.
- **Adaptable** – By modifying angle, position or leverage point, body weight movements can range from easy to very difficult; making these exercises useful to all fitness levels.

Incorporating these basic movements into your workout will improve your strength, endurance, and agility, giving you the ability to participate in physical activities you might never have considered. [Click here](#) for more information on body weight movements.



Eight Foods You Didn't Know You Could (and Should) Be Eating!

#4: Jicama



You have probably walked past jicama in the produce section of your supermarket and wondered about the taste of this odd looking potato. Jicama is pronounced "hik-ama," (with an "h" sound instead of a "j") and is the edible root of a vine native to Mexico. Though jicama looks like a potato on the outside, once peeled, its flavor is much different. Jicama is fresh, crispy, and slightly sweet. It has a flavor similar to a pear or water chestnut and can be eaten raw. In Mexico, they are served uncooked as street food sprinkled with lime juice and chili powder. One cup of jicama has only 45 calories, less than 1 gram of fat, almost 6 grams of fiber and is packed with vitamin C. Next time you think about snacking on greasy potato chips, slice up a jicama instead and enjoy this unique and healthy alternative.

Ways to enjoy your jicama:

- Slice up or grate and toss into salads
- Cube and toss into soups, stir fries or casseroles (treat like water chestnuts)
- Peel and cut into fry-resembling strips, then season with lime juice and cinnamon
- Cut jicama into thin chips, and dip into healthy summer salsas and guacamole

Yummy Jicama Slaw

Try this new spin on coleslaw. It's perfect for a hungry crowd, or a small picnic. I enjoy creating my own recipes, but this one's inspired by Emeril, and made healthy by yours truly!

1 cup plain fat-free yogurt or Greek yogurt

3 tablespoons lime juice

2 tablespoons cider vinegar

2 tablespoons Splenda ®

1 tablespoon chopped cilantro or basil leaves

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

3 cups shredded or julienned jicama

1/2 bunch green onions, sliced thinly on the bias

1 red bell or orange pepper, thinly sliced

Combine the yogurt, lime juice, cider vinegar, Splenda, cilantro, cumin, salt and pepper and whisk to combine. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow flavors to develop.

When ready to serve, combine the jicama, green onions, and red bell pepper in a large bowl and add the dressing. Toss gently but thoroughly to combine. Serve immediately.

For more nutrition tips visit Annessa at her [WIBC blog](#).